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Perspective

The historical context of the establishment of the Department of Dentistry of National Taiwan University

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The modern medical system and the medical education system for cultivating physicians were first introduced to Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). A medical school was established in Taiwan in 1899 (Meiji 32). In those days, Taiwan's medical education system continued to improve and became mature, and it became

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the driving force behind Taiwan's medicine and an important cornerstone of public health development. However, during that period, the colonial government did not establish a formal education system for cultivating dentists. Due to an increase in the number of Japanese dentists who came to Taiwan to practice and Taiwanese dentists who returned to hometown to practice after studying dentistry aboard (mainly in Japan), Taiwan's dental profession was still booming. The island-wide Taiwan Dental Association and Taiwan Dental Academic Association were established in 1916 (Taisho 5) and 1929 (Showa 4), respectively. Taiwan's dental community initiated the establishment of a dental school as early as 1925 (Taisho 14) when the Taipei Dental Association recommended the proposal for the establishment of a Dental College in Taiwan, but it did not come to fruition at the end of those early years. Until the end of the World War II (1945), the number of dentists in Taiwan reached 738, including 493 dentists who were

Taiwanese.^{1–3} Due to the separation from Japan and the social atmosphere after the World War II, the channel for Taiwanese students to study dentistry overseas was cut off. For a while, Taiwan's dental industry did not have the input of new dentists to the dental profession. After the efforts of all walks of life, the Department of Dentistry (also known as dental school) of National Taiwan University (NTU) was finally established in 1953. We attempted to unearth the historical context of its establishment through the collection and analysis of relevant historical documents.

In this article, the historical research method was used to collect old newspaper reports and documents involving the events regarding the establishment of dental schools in Taiwan from the postwar period to the 1950s and to interpret their implicated meaning. The descriptions of these events and their significance are shown in Table 1. Based on the collected historical documents, we unearthed 22 related events, and restored the historical context of the

Table 1 The major events regarding the establishment of dental schools and their significance in Taiwan from the postwar period to the 1950s.

Time	Events	Significance	Source ^a
1945	On October 23, 1945, a newspaper reported that the Taiwan Dental Association was established. This organization aimed to fight for the establishment of Taiwan's dental legal system and the rights of original dental doctors, and requested the government to build a dental education institution.	Taiwanese dentists gathered immediately after the World War II to form a dental association to fight for the rights of dentists from the government.	A
1946	In the year after the World War II, Dr. Shwei Kuo entered the College of Medicine of National Taiwan University (NTU) to teach dentistry for medical students. Dr. Shwei Kuo served as a teaching assistant in the former Taipei Imperial University College of Medicine and was the founding director of the dental school of NTU.	The College of Medicine of NTU maintained the tradition that medical students should take dental courses and retained the division of dentistry for teaching and researches. This laid the foundation for the establishment of the dental school of NTU in the future.	E
1946	A historical document showed that in 1946, several members of parliament of Taiwan Provincial Council proposed a bill to request to establish a dental education institution for dental students who studied dentistry in Japan and returned to Taiwan and sent the bill to the Taiwan Provincial Education Department for implementation.	The earliest event was discovered so far involving Taiwan's public opinion representatives advocating the establishment of a dental school to accommodate dental students who studied dentistry in Japan and returned to Taiwan after the war.	B
1947	A historical document demonstrated that in 1947, a member of parliament of Taiwan Provincial Council proposed a provisional proposal to request to actively establish a pharmacy school and a dental school in the medical college of a university for national health needs.	This proposal explicitly recommended active preparation of a dental school in the medical college of a university.	B
1947	A historical document showed that at the end of 1947, the Taiwan Provincial Education Department issued an official document to the NTU expressing its approval of the previous provisional proposal related to establish a pharmacy school and a dental school in Taiwan,	At that time, Taiwan's highest education authority approved the establishment of a dental school in the NTU.	D

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Time	Events	Significance	Source ^a
	and requested the NTU to handle and complete it.		
1947	A historical document showed that at the end of 1947, the NTU planned to establish a dental school based on the recommendation of the Taiwan Provincial Council, and compiled a 1948 provisional annual budget estimate for this plan.	The earliest event was discovered so far involving the establishment of a dental school in the NTU.	B
1949	The government of the Republic of China moved to Taiwan, and the National Defense Medical College, including its dental school, also moved to Taiwan in 1949.	The dental school of National Defense Medical College became the first dental school in Taiwan.	E
1951	On March 7, 1951, a newspaper reported that the Taiwan Dental Association Annual Conference clearly recommended the government to establish a dental school in the NTU and requested the Legislature to formulate a dentist law.	After the central government moved to Taiwan, Taiwan's dental community continued to fight for the rights of dentists from the government.	A
1952	A historical document demonstrated that in 1952, a member of parliament of Taiwan Provincial Council proposed a bill to request to establish a dental school in Taiwan.	After the central government moved to Taiwan, Taiwan's public opinion continued to push the government to establish a dental school in Taiwan.	B
1952	A historical document showed that the feasibility of the establishment of departments of dentistry and pharmacy in the College of Medicine of NTU was approved at the university council on March 23, 1952. Moreover, it shall be handled in accordance with the principles by the administrative council and the academic affairs council.	Various councils within the NTU approved and passed the proposal to establish a dental school in the NTU.	D
1953	On May 15, 1953, a newspaper reported that the Ministry of Education approved the establishment of a dental school in the College of Medicine of NTU.	The dental school of NTU was established and became the first dental school established in Taiwan.	A
1953	In 1953, a newspaper reported that in the admission examination of NTU, 10 people applied for dentistry and 1139 people applied for medicine. The newspaper subsequently reported that none of the dental candidates met the admission standards.	The dental school of NTU held its first admission examination in the admission examination of NTU, but no one was enrolled.	A
1954	The university history in the introduction to NTU of the 1956 academic year mentioned that in the 1953 academic year, the Department of Dentistry was added to the College of Medicine of NTU, and it began to enroll first-year students in the 1954 academic year.	Taiwan Joint College Entrance Examination was conducted for the first time in 1954, and the dental school of NTU admitted students through this system. Although some students were admitted, they eventually gave up and no one came to study dentistry.	A
1954	A historical document showed that in 1954, a member of parliament of Taiwan Provincial Council proposed a bill to request the provincial government to establish a girl's dental school or a girl's pharmacy school.	During the Japanese colonial period, there was a custom that Taiwanese female students went to Japan to study in girl's dental schools. However, this proposal did not come to fruition.	B
1955	A newspaper published the list of joint college admissions for the 1955 academic year, and nine students were admitted to the Department of Dentistry (Pre-Medicine B) of NTU.	The dental school of NTU began to have its first class of dental students.	A

Table 1 (continued)

Time	Events	Significance	Source ^a
1955	The first-year course schedule of the Department of Dentistry of NTU was consistent with that of the Department of Medicine (Pre-Medicine A) of NTU.	The courses for the first and second years of the dental school were mainly common and basic medical courses. At that time, there were no additional dental teachers to teach dental students.	C
1956	The second-year course schedule of the Department of Dentistry of NTU was consistent with that of the Department of Medicine of NTU.		C
1957	The Department of Dentistry of NTU had third-year dental students for the first time and their course schedule, while there were only two dental teachers in 1957.	The dental professional courses started for the first time in the College of Medicine of NTU.	C
1958	The Department of Dentistry of NTU had fourth-year dental students for the first time and their course schedule, while the number of dental teachers increased to three in 1958.	The dental school of NTU had a serious shortage of teachers. In the early years of the dental school, the number of full-time teachers only increased to four.	C
1959	The Department of Dentistry of NTU had fifth-year dental students for the first time and their course schedule, while the number of dental teachers increased to four in 1959.		C
1960	The Department of Dentistry of NTU had sixth-year dental students for the first time and their course schedule, while there were only four dental teachers in 1960.	For the first time, the dental school of NTU had a full complement of dental students from grades 1 to 6, and for the first time, the National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH) had the dental interns.	C
1961	The Department of Dentistry of NTU had five dental graduates in its first class in 1961.	Taiwan finally had the input of young new dentists to the dental profession 16 years after the World War II.	E

A: The resources of National Taiwan Library.

B: The database of Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica.

C: The files of National Taiwan University Curriculum Digital Archives.

D: The documents of National Taiwan University College of Medicine Archives.

E: The information from school official website.

^a Data sources.

establishment of the dental school of NTU, while these data sources were the resources of the National Taiwan Library (n = 6), the database of Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica (n = 5), the files of National Taiwan University Curriculum Digital Archives (n = 6), the documents of National Taiwan University College of Medicine Archives (n = 2), and the information from school official website (n = 3), respectively. In the early postwar period of 1945, Taiwanese dentists gathered immediately to form a dental association to fight for the rights of dentists from the government, including the suggestion for the establishment of a dental education institution in Taiwan. In 1946, Dr. Shwei Kuo entered the College of Medicine of NTU to teach dentistry for medical students, and this later became the main force within the NTU to promote and implement the establishment of the dental school of NTU. In the same year, the Taiwan Provincial Council proposed a bill to request to establish a dental education institution for dental students who studied dentistry in Japan and returned to Taiwan after the war. However, in 1947, a

provisional proposal to request to actively establish a pharmacy school and a dental school in the medical college of a university for national health needs was approved by Taiwan's highest education authority at that time, and the NTU was clearly instructed to handle the proposal. Although the NTU had compiled a 1948 provisional annual budget estimate for the establishment of a dental school in the College of Medicine of NTU, it failed to achieve in that stage. On the other hand, in 1949, the dental school of National Defense Medical College moved to Taiwan, and unexpectedly became the first dental school in Taiwan. Furthermore, after the central government moved to Taiwan, Taiwan's dental community and public opinion continued to push the government to establish a dental school. Finally, in 1952, various councils within the NTU passed the proposal to establish a dental school in the College of Medicine of NTU, and in 1953, the Ministry of Education approved the establishment of the dental school of NTU. The enrollment status of the dental school did not go well in the first two years after its establishment. Until

1955, it began to have its first class of dental students. In fact, the biggest dilemma in the early years of the dental school was the severe shortage of dental teachers. Until 1960, the dental school of NTU had a full complement of dental students from grades 1 to 6, but the dental school had only four full-time teachers. In 1961, there were 5 dental students graduating from the NTU. Taiwan finally had the input of young new dentists to the dental profession 16 years after the World War II.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first article to unearth the context of the establishment of the dental school of NTU. According to our findings, we initially conclude that the driving forces behind the establishment of the dental school of NTU are (1) the petition of the dental students who studied dentistry in Japan and returned to Taiwan after the war, (2) the proposals from Taiwan's public opinion representatives, (3) the suggestions from Taiwan's dental community, and (4) the launch of internal strength within the College of Medicine (its dental division) of NTU. Ultimately, there was a strong consensus for national health needs in our society, which led to the establishment of the dental school of NTU in 1953. Since Dr. Shwei Kuo entered the College of Medicine of NTU in 1946, the number of dental teachers in the NTU increased from only one to 88 in 2020. After 70 years of development, Taiwan has made a great progress in medical and dental researches, services, and teaching. However, how to cultivate comprehensive contributing dentists with a sense of humanistic care and social responsibility will be a major issue for dental education in the near future.^{4,5}

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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None.

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